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Letter dated 17 February 1998 from the Permanent Representative of Turkey to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith a letter dated 13 February 1998 addressed to you by His Excellency Mr. Aytuğ Plûmer, Representative of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus.

I should be grateful if the text of the present letter and its annex, to which is appended a letter from His Excellency Mr. Rauf R. Denktaş, President of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, dated 25 January 1998, would be circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 61, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Hüseyin E. ÇELEM
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

ANNEX

Letter dated 13 February 1998 from Mr. Aytuğ Plümer addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to enclose herewith a copy of the letter dated 25 January 1998 addressed to you by His Excellency Mr. Rauf R. Denktaş, President of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, in connection with the opening of the Paphos military airbase in South Cyprus for the use of the Greek air force within the context of the "joint military doctrine" between the Greek Cypriot administration and Greece.

I should be grateful if the text of the present letter and its appendix could be circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 61, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Aytuğ PLÜMER
Representative
Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus

APPENDIX

Letter dated 25 January 1998 from Mr. Rauf R. Denktaş addressed to the Secretary-General

I have previously expressed my concern over the continued Greek-Greek Cypriot efforts towards increasing the South's military prowess and arsenal. The latest escalation, which will have serious repercussions for the stability of the island and the region, is the opening of the Paphos airbase for the use of the Greek air force, within the context of the "joint military doctrine".

You have no doubt been informed that the construction of the Paphos airbase has been completed and that the Greek Cypriot administration took delivery of it on 24 January 1998. The official inauguration will take place after the elections in the South.

Since the introduction of the "joint military doctrine" in 1993, the Greek Cypriot administration, together with Greece, has accelerated the build-up of arms and armed forces in southern Cyprus, bringing its current military expenditure in excess of $2 million a day, which, in per capita terms, is among the highest in the world. The construction of air and naval bases in southern Cyprus for Greek fighter planes and warships is part of this ongoing belligerent stance and is utterly in violation of the 1960 Agreements.

Mr. Clerides himself has confessed that the ultimate aim of the Greek Cypriot side is to "resurrect Hellenism in the North". Most recently he has publicly announced that the ultimate fight will be made for recapturing Girne. So long as the Greek Cypriot side does not abandon the mentality which finds expression in slogans like "Greece is here" and in military exercises designed to "recapture lost territory", it will have a hard time convincing us, the counterpart, that their preparations are anything but offensive.

The Paphos airbase and the sophisticated weapons, like S-300 missiles, are vehicles disturbing the balance between the guarantor motherlands, Turkey and Greece, a fact that had already been admitted back in 1995, when the first Greek fighter planes participated in the joint military exercises. The Greek Defence Minister at the time, Mr. Arsenis, publicly stated, "the defence pact changes the military balance in the area in favour of Greece".

The attitude displayed by the Greek Cypriot side demonstrates also that the Greek Cypriot administration is choosing to ignore the relevant paragraphs of the latest Security Council resolutions on this issue. As you will no doubt recall, the latest resolutions (1092 (1996) of 23 December 1996, 1117 (1997) of 27 June 1997 and 1146 (1997) of 23 December 1997) reiterated concern over the continuing excessive levels of military forces and armaments in the Republic of Cyprus and the rate at which they are being expanded, upgraded and modernized, including by the introduction of sophisticated weaponry.

I would therefore kindly request you to draw Greek Cypriot attention to the dangers inherent in such an irrational policy.

(Signed) Rauf R. DENKTAŞ
President